

composite material.

22. The method of claim 18 further including placing a first layer comprising thermoplastic fibers adjacent a first side of the nonwoven web material and placing a second layer adjacent an opposite side of the nonwoven web from the first layer to form a composite material. --

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the various objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action dated October 10, 2001 is respectfully requested in view of the above amendment and following remarks.

Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 have been amended. Claim 1 has been cancelled without prejudice to filing in a later application. Claims 18-22 have been added. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 2-22 will be pending in the application.

Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 have only been amended to change dependencies. New claims 18-22 are supported by the specification as filed as at, for example, page 4, line 12 to page 5, line 29; page 7, lines 3-5; page 7, lines 23-24; and page 8, lines 23-27.

- **The 102(b) rejection of claims 1-3, 6-7 and 10 over Doerer.**

Claims 1-3, 6-7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as having each and every feature and relationship anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,418,031 to Doerer et al. Applicants have amended claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 to depend from allowed claim 5. Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 are allowable for at least this reason.

- **The 102(b) rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-7 over Beard.**

Claims 1-4 and 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as having each and every feature and relationship anticipated by European Patent EP 0908303A2 to Beard et al. Applicants have amended claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 to depend from allowed claim 5. Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 are allowable for at least this reason.

- **The 103(a) rejection of claims 8 and 9 over Doerer.**

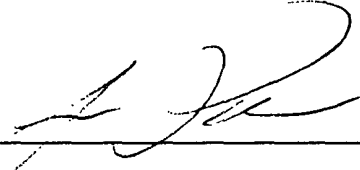
Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as having each and every feature and relationship suggested by the above Doerer reference as applied to claims 1-3, 6-7 and 10. Applicants have amended claims 8 and 9 to depend from allowed claim 5. Claims 8 and 9 are allowable for at least this reason.

In summary, Applicants have addressed each of the rejections within the present Office Action in their remarks. It is believed the application now stands in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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¶ 2. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the natural fiber bundles are cordage fibers.

¶ 3. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the natural fiber bundles are selected from sisal, abaca, henequen, kenaf and jute.

¶ 4. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the long natural fiber bundles have a chopped fiber length in the range of 10 - 50 mm.

¶ 5. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ comprising a synthetic fiber component.

¶ 6. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the web has a basis weight up to about 100 g/m².

¶ 7. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the web has a basis weight of at least about 100 g/m².

¶ 8. The nonwoven web material of claim ¹/~~5~~ wherein the unpulped fibers have a modulus of elasticity in the range of about 2 - 5 x 10⁶ psi.

18. A method of producing a nonwoven web material comprising:
dispersing unpulped natural fiber bundles in a fluid to form a fluid dispersion; and
depositing the fluid dispersion on a fiber collecting wire to form the nonwoven web material.

Appl. No.: 09/341,635

Atty. Docket No. DEXNON/087/PC/US

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19. The method of claim 18 wherein the web material comprises at least about 30 percent by weight unpulped natural fiber bundles.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the fluid dispersion further includes a member selected from pulp, man-made fibers and mixtures thereof.

21. The method of claim 18 further including placing a layer comprising thermoplastic fibers adjacent a side of the nonwoven web material to form a composite material.

22. The method of claim 18 further including placing a first layer comprising thermoplastic fibers adjacent a first side of the nonwoven web material and placing a second layer adjacent an opposite side of the nonwoven web from the first layer to form a composite material.
